

**CENTRAL OREGON SHOOTING SPORTS  
ASSOCIATION (COSSA)**

# **Safety Manual**

August 5, 2015

**Safety is everyone's responsibility. The most important goal of recreational shooting at COSSA range facilities is being safe.**

**COSSA range usage and safety rules are designed to ensure that all participants have a safe and enjoyable experience.**

**Safety depends on the individual range user. Common sense and courtesy are the cornerstones of safe shooting. The key to the safe enjoyment of the shooting sports is a personal sense of responsibility not only for one's self, but for the safety of all persons on the range.**

## **Section 1 - Rules for Safe Gun Handling**

### ***The Fundamental Rules of Firearms Safety***

**1. Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded.**

Whenever you see, touch or are handed a firearm, assume that it is loaded. If you pick up a firearm, always open the action and check its loaded or unloaded condition. Even if you have just seen it cleared by another person, do not accept it until you check and verify that it is unloaded. If you do not know how to unload and clear a firearm, do not touch it and get help from a person who does know.

**2. ALWAYS keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction.**

A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle (front end of the barrel) is pointed at all times. Common sense and good judgment dictate the safest

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direction, depending on different circumstances. For instance, a wall in a house is not a safe direction because a bullet can penetrate several walls. Pointing at the ground may be best, but a hard surface could result in a ricochet. It is up to the shooter to pick the direction with the least potential for any harm to life or property.

### **3. ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard until ready to shoot.**

When holding or handling a gun, straighten your trigger finger and consciously place it along the side of the gun. Until you are actually ready to fire, do not touch the trigger. When you are finished shooting, immediately place your finger outside the trigger guard.

### **4. ALWAYS be sure of your target and what is beyond.**

Be absolutely sure you have identified your target beyond any doubt. Equally important, be aware of the area beyond your target. This means observing your prospective area of fire before you shoot. If your shot misses, where will the bullet go? A high-power rifle has a range of three miles, and a .22 rim-fire rifle can shoot up to one and a half miles. Never fire in a direction where there are people or any potential for mishap. If you shoot over a hill, who is on the other side? Think first, shoot second.

## ***Other Important Safety Rules***

<p><b>In addition to the following rules, certain firearms and many shooting activities and disciplines require additional safety rules.</b></p>
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### **1. ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.**

Never transport a loaded firearm. You may have a loaded firearm for self-defense purposes. In that case you must take special precautions to ensure safe carry and to restrict access by unauthorized persons.

### **2. Know how to operate and use the gun safely.**

Before handling a firearm learn its mechanical and handling

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characteristics. Know how to safely load and unload it.

### **3. Do not rely on the gun's safety.**

A safety is a mechanical device that can and does fail. Keeping the safety engaged until you are ready to fire is a safe gun handling practice, but it does not relieve you from following the Fundamental Rules of Firearms Safety (See Section 1 above).

### **4. Be sure the gun is safe to operate.**

Unload the gun and visually check the interior of the barrel (bore) for obstructions like cleaning patches, mud/snow or insects. An obstructed bore may cause the gun to explode when fired and cause serious injury. If you are not sure if the gun is in safe condition, have it checked by a knowledgeable gunsmith.

### **5. Use only the correct ammunition for the gun.**

Do not shoot the gun unless you have the proper ammunition. Incorrect ammunition may cause the gun to malfunction or explode. Most guns have the proper ammunition type stamped on the barrel. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on its box and sometimes stamped on the base of the cartridge.

### **6. If your gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care.**

Keep the muzzle pointed down-range (at the targets). Take your finger out of the trigger guard. The cartridge may be a “hang-fire” (delayed ignition), mis-fire or a “squib” (no or very small powder charge that fails to expel the bullet). Wait at least 30 seconds before opening the action. With the firearm unloaded and the action open, check the bore for obstructions. If the bore is obstructed, do not fire. Take your gun to a qualified gunsmith. Ask for help if you do not know what to do.

### **7. Wear eye and ear protection.**

***All persons on or near a firing line (or as designated by signage)***

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**must wear shooting glasses and hearing protection. This includes shooters, guests and spectators. Eye and ear protection is NOT OPTIONAL.** The noise generated by all firearms, large and small, can cause irreversible hearing damage. Bullet fragments, hot gases, ejected cartridge casings and other debris can cause serious eye injury.

Eye protection shall have **ANSI Z87** shatter-resistant lenses.

### **8. NEVER:**

a. Accept a firearm from another person without personally checking that it is unloaded.

b. Pull a firearm toward you by the muzzle.

### **9. Never use alcohol or over-the-counter, prescription or other drugs that impair physical or mental ability before or while handling firearms or shooting.**

Alcohol and many other drugs/medications impair physical coordination and good judgment, which are critically important to safe gun handling and use.

### **10. Before cleaning and maintaining your firearm, be sure that it is unloaded.**

Unload your gun and check it to be absolutely sure that it is unloaded. It is a good idea to look directly into the chamber and magazine, and then probe them with a finger to ensure they are unloaded.

### **11. Store guns and ammunition so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons, both adults and children.**

It is your personal responsibility to ensure that only trained, responsible persons have access to your firearms and ammunition. Access can be controlled by storing your arms in a locked container, secure closet/room or safe, and then restricting the keys or combination to trusted, responsible persons. "Trigger locks" and other devices that attach to the gun may fail and should never take the

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place of safe gun handling and observance of all safety rules.

## **Section 2 - Rules for Sharing and Using the Range**

### **1. Sign-In Requirements**

All members, guests and visitors are required to sign in at the kiosks located at the east and west gates, unless participating in a scheduled event. The sign-in log is important for reporting range use to the BLM.

It is COSSA policy that all persons sign in at scheduled events whether they are direct participants or observers.

### **2. Guests**

In the interests of safety and security, all guests to the Range must be accompanied by a COSSA member. Each COSSA member may bring up to four (4) guests onto COSSA facilities per visit. There must be at least one adult COSSA member supervising shooters 17 years of age or younger.

### **3. Walk-In or Drive-In Public Visitors**

If the gates are open on the weekends, the public may walk in or drive in and use the facilities per BLM directive. These visitors must sign the liability release register at the kiosk and pay the guest fee. They may then proceed to the Bill Fockler Sight-In Range and use the range following all posted range rules.

### **4. Leaving the Gates Open – Times Allowed**

Gates will be kept closed and locked except for instances when there is a scheduled match or event sponsored by a COSSA discipline or an outside group. The gates will be locked after the event without notice, which may be as early as 1:00PM. The discipline conducting the event will be responsible for locking the gates when the event is over. Work parties may or may not choose to leave the gates open.

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When a gate is left open, the lock must be closed, the tumbler spun and locked to the sliding bolt.

### **5. Parking**

Safe parking space is provided by COSSA. Vehicles should be parked away from the firing line and not be subject to ricochets or direct fire. Major events will have designated parking areas.

### **6. Hours of Operation**

As a matter of policy, COSSA range facilities are available to members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year round. However, shooters must respect scheduled events.

As a courtesy to participants camping at the range for a major event, shooting is restricted to one hour after sun-up to one hour before sunset from the night before to the night after a major event unless permission is obtained from the match director for that event.

### **7. Firearms and Ammunition Allowed**

As a matter of policy, COSSA allows any firearm that may be legally owned and operated, and any ammunition that maybe legally possessed and used, except that exploding, incendiary (tracer, flares) or steel core, tungsten core or armor piercing ammunition is prohibited. Because certain bays are dedicated to specific uses, there are restrictions on firearms and ammunition in certain bays. See subsections 8 and 9 below.

### **8. Dedication of Bays to Specific Uses**

Shooting areas and bays are dedicated to certain types of activity. For example, the COSSA Kids small-bore range is restricted to .22 rim-fire only. The Buffalo range and the Black Powder Silhouette range are restricted to unjacketed lead bullets only. Cowboy Action bays 9-14 are restricted to unjacketed lead bullets only.

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A guide to the COSSA ranges and their appropriate uses is appended to this policy manual and is sent annually to all members. Facilities, including but not limited to shooting benches or movable targets, must not be moved from one area to another.

### **9. Use of Fully Automatic Weapons**

**Fully-automatic weapons are allowed at the COSSA range in Bay 1 and Bay 18. They are also allowed in any bay designated during a special event. Fully-automatic shooters are required to:**

1. Alert other range users that fully automatic firing will commence.
2. Maintain continuous supervision of any other persons firing the weapon.
3. Have immediate, personal possession of documentation showing that the automatic weapon or suppressor is registered as required under federal law (ORS 166.272(3)).

### **10. General Housekeeping**

All shooters will adhere to rules of common courtesy by picking up their brass and shotgun hulls, picking up all litter, and placing it in designated trash receptacles. Place cardboard targets and boxes in the recycling trailer, not in trash barrels or the garbage trailer.

## **Section 3 - Standard Procedures for All Ranges**

The following range rules apply to all COSSA ranges and property including the Public Range. Failure to comply with all rules and the lawful commands of club officials, range officers and activity or match directors may result in immediate expulsion from the range.

The safety rules and procedures of disciplines conducting COSSA-approved competitions, practice, training events and other recognized activities will prevail during that event subject to approval by the COSSA board.

### **General Range Rules**

- 1. Rules Observation** - All persons, both members and guests, must observe all laws, range rules and safety rules governing firearms ownership and proper usage. Each person must accept his or her personal obligation for acting in a safe and responsible manner.
- 2. Range Official Authority** - All persons must obey the lawful orders and commands of club officers, range officials, range officers and match/activity directors.
- 3. Responsibility of Guests** - Guests shall be aware of and observe the rules, safety procedures and range protocols.
- 4. Responsibility for Minor Children** - Minor children (17 years of age or under), who are not shooting, shall be under the direct supervision and control of a responsible adult. An adult COSSA member must supervise shooters under 17 years of age. The supervising adult may not shoot while the child is shooting.
- 5. Eye and Ear Protection** - Eye and ear protection are required for all persons, shooters, guests and spectators on or near the firing line.
- 6. Lead Hazard Control** - All shooters, especially children, shall observe lead health hazard control by not eating or drinking on the firing line, and thoroughly washing the hands and face around the mouth before eating or drinking. Each discipline is responsible for providing hand wipes.



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**7. Alcohol** - Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other substances at the COSSA facility that may impair physical coordination and/or judgment is strictly prohibited. An exception is made for consumption of alcohol after all shooting events and activities are closed for the day.

**8. Use of Explosives Prohibited** – The detonation of explosive substances is prohibited. Tannerite© or similar material and cannons with non-explosive projectiles may be used only with prior Board approval.

**9. Approved Targets** – COSSA allows the use of paper, steel or biodegradable clay targets. ***Biodegradable clay targets may be used only on the shotgun ranges or at COSSA-approved events.*** Each shooter is responsible for properly policing and disposing of his or her targets in the proper receptacle.

**10. Prohibited Targets** - Trash, glass, boxes, cans, exploding targets, propane tanks, tire rims, discarded electronic equipment or appliances, propane tanks, or other materials that would result in sharp edged fragments are NOT allowed as targets on COSSA ranges. Food targets like potatoes may be used in scheduled events with prior COSSA Board approval. Caution must be exercised when using steel-belted radial tires to anchor target stands. Unpredictable ricochet is possible. Large rocks must be removed from impact areas to reduce ricochet hazards.

**11. Metal Targets** - Metal targets specifically designed for shooting must be positioned from the shooter at least 25 feet for handgun and shotgun using bird or buckshot, and 50 yards for .223 and other high-power rifles and shotgun slugs. In recognized events shooting positions will be no closer than the safe distances established by the discipline's respective national organizations.

**12. Defective or DUD Ammunition** – Place defective ammunition in the receptacles provided for that purpose. Do NOT put defective rounds in the trash containers.

**13. Clean-Up Responsibility** – Each shooter shall properly police and dispose of his or her targets and expended brass in the proper

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receptacles. Burnable items should be taken to the designated burn pile, and not placed in trash barrels.

**14. Wildlife Is Protected** – The area contained within the boundaries of the COSSA Park facility is considered by COSSA to be a wildlife sanctuary. There is no shooting of wild animals (including elk, deer, coyotes, rabbits, birds) for any reason at any time including hunting season.

**15. Smoking** – In accordance with BLM regulations, smoking is restricted to cleared areas only or while inside a vehicle. All smoking must be in compliance with the current BLM fire alert level, which may at times completely prohibit smoking.

**16. Responsibility for Pets** - Pets must remain under physical control (leashed or physically controlled) during firing activities. Owners are responsible for picking up after their pets.

### Explanation of Terms

**1. Cold Range** - COSSA is a COLD range. COLD Range means that firearms must be unloaded, the action or cylinder open, and the magazine removed (if applicable) at all times except when on designated firing lines and ready to fire. **All firearms brought onto COSSA facilities must be cased or holstered and unloaded (except for concealed handgun licensees and law enforcement).**

**The following exceptions to Cold Range apply:**

a. Law enforcement officers training at COSSA facilities may carry loaded firearms to the extent required by their employing agency's written procedures. Such firearms must be properly holstered or otherwise secured and may not be handled except in accordance with written agency procedures.

b. Properly licensed or authorized persons may carry concealed firearms, but the firearm shall not be visible or visually detectable. Firearms carried under this exception may not be handled, except for a shooting activity, and then must be handled in compliance with COSSA range safety rules.

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c. Loaded handguns may be carried holstered in order to practice organized disciplines such as IPSC, IDPA, Speed Steel, Cowboy Action, Lady Hawkes, Handgun Silhouette, and COSSA-approved training classes or shooting events, but must be handled only in compliance with discipline-specific safety procedures.

**2. Loaded Firearm** - A firearm shall be loaded ONLY on the firing line, pointing down range (at the targets), and the firing line has been declared HOT or open for firing. **Firearms shall not be loaded or unloaded at the shooter's vehicle or any other place other than a HOT firing line – or at designated loading or unloading areas adjacent to the firing line.**

**3. Unloaded Firearm** – Unloaded firearm means action or cylinder open, chamber(s) empty, magazine removed (if applicable), and muzzle (the forward “business” end of the barrel) pointed in a **safe direction**, or stored in a case. **Even in an Unloaded condition, a firearm should never be considered “safe”.**

<b>Specifically:</b>	Bolt action	=	Bolt back and open
	Pump action	=	Bolt back; ejection port open
	Semi-auto	=	Bolt back; ejection port open
	Lever action	=	Bolt back; breech open
	Single shot	=	Breech block open
	DA revolver	=	Cylinder open
	SA revolver	=	Loading gate open
	Semi-auto pistol	=	Slide back; ejection port open
	Muzzle-Loader	=	No load; no cap

**4. Unattended Firearm** - No firearm shall be left unattended unless it is unloaded and cased, or unloaded with the action or cylinder open and the magazine removed (if applicable).

**5. Muzzle** – The forward end of the barrel.

**6. Safe Direction** - Every shooter is responsible for ensuring that muzzle of the firearm does NOT point at or sweep any person at any time. Uncased firearms carried behind the firing line shall be carried with the **MUZZLE UP**.

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7. **Hot Firing Line** - A HOT firing line means that no persons are forward of the firing line, and the range is clear for handling of firearms and shooting. While the range is HOT, all persons must remain behind the firing line whether anyone is shooting or not. Spectators must remain behind the shooters.
8. **Cold Firing Line** - A COLD firing line means that a cease-fire has been called and persons are allowed forward of the firing line for the purpose of scoring, posting or removing targets, recovering fired brass, setting up, taking down or repairing targets or chronograph equipment, or other related activities. **Firearms may not be handled for any purpose while persons are down-range. All firearms must be in completely unloaded condition (see *Unloaded Firearm*) and benched with muzzles down-range, or racked.**
9. **Up-Range** – “Up-Range” refers to the area to the rear of the shooter. (Example: Do not allow the muzzle to point up-range.)
10. **Down-Range** – “Down-Range” refers to the area in front of the shooter: toward the target and beyond. (Example: Keep the muzzle pointing down-range at all times.)
11. **Small-Bore** – Generally .22 rim-fire caliber and below.

### Standard Range Safety Procedures

1. **COSSA range safety procedures apply** at all COSSA ranges including the Public Range.
2. **Handling Firearms on a Cold Firing Line is Prohibited** - During a COLD firing line all handling of firearms (including casing, uncasing, set-up and removal) is prohibited, except at a designated Safe Gun Handling Area.
3. **Firearms May Be Loaded ONLY on a Hot Firing Line.**
4. **Remain Behind Bench or Firing Line** - No person shall be at or near a shooting bench or firing line during a COLD firing line. All persons not moving down-range shall remain behind the firing line and all firing points or benches.

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**5. Safety Area** –Some COSSA ranges (typically the Practical and Cowboy Action bays), may have a specially designated location where UNLOADED firearms may be safely handled for the purpose of dry-firing, inspecting, adjusting, repairing or placing the firearm in a secure container. Ammunition, dummy rounds and magazines or speed-loaders (loaded or unloaded) may NOT be handled at a Safety Area. The Safety Area may be used when the firing line is HOT or COLD, or gun handling is otherwise prohibited.

**6. Handling Ammunition and Magazines or Speed-Loaders** – Ammunition may be handled, and magazines (detachable/removable) and revolver speed-loaders may be loaded anywhere except at a Safety Area.

**7. Declaring the Firing Line Hot or Cold** - During open range firing in the absence of a Range Safety Officer, it is every shooter's responsibility to communicate and cooperate on HOT and COLD firing line requirements. Shooters must work together to designate one person to declare the firing line HOT or COLD.

**8. Bringing Rifles and Shotguns to or from the Firing Line** – Rifles and shotguns shall be brought to or removed from the firing line only during times that the firing line is in HOT condition. ***Rifles and shotguns brought to or removed from the firing line shall be in unloaded condition and encased.*** The firearm shall be immediately benched (muzzle pointed down-range) or placed in a rack. Exception: Cowboy Action and 3Gun match officials may designate an area called a Loading Table near the firing line where handguns and rifles are loaded. The shooter carries a LOADED rifle from the loading table to the firing line.

**9. Bringing Handguns to or from the Firing Line** - Handguns shall be carried to or from the firing line in unloaded condition and cased in a soft or hard pistol case/bag, holster or other appropriate container. The cylinder or loading gate of a revolver and the slide of a semi-auto pistol may be closed while cased or holstered. Handguns may not be carried to or from the firing line in the hand. Exception: For Cowboy Action competition, the shooter carries LOADED handguns holstered from the loading table to the firing line.

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**NOTE:** Various disciplines or activities (Cowboy Action, IDPA, IPSC, 3Gun, Lady Hawks) may require that **handguns** be transferred from the case to a holster, or the reverse **ONLY** at a designated **Safe Gun Handling Area**. No ammunition, magazines or speed-loaders may be handled at a **Safe Gun Handling Area**.

**10. Posting the Red Flag** - On the 200 yard range a red flag shall be posted during a Cold Range before any person moves down range to set targets, score targets, clean-up debris or any other purpose. The red flag shall be taken down when all persons have returned from down range to the firing line and a hot range is in effect. This rule may also be extended to other ranges, so please be aware.

**11. Muzzle Shall Be Pointed Down-Range at All times While Shooting.**

**12. Fired Rounds Must Impact Berms** - All rounds fired must hit the impact berms, the range surface area surrounded by the berms, or the designated backstop area (i.e. long range rifle). Intentionally shooting over the berm or shooting in the air at thrown targets is prohibited. Unseen persons could be down-range. Shotgun shooting is excepted. Metal targets must be positioned and/or angled to minimize the risk of bullet or fragment escape from the range/bay.

**13. Cease-Fire** - Cease-fire means that all shooters shall immediately stop firing, take the finger out of the trigger guard, keep the firearm pointed down-range and stand-by for instructions. Anyone may call a cease-fire if that person perceives an unsafe condition or if it is necessary to service the targets after a hot range is in force. All shooters are required to abide by the cease-fire without delay.

**NOTES:**